

1. Cancelled.
2. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the reducing agent is selected from the group consisting of ascorbic acid, ascorbic acid salts, ascorbic acid esters, erythorbic acid, alkali metal bisulfites, metabisulfites, and thiosulfates.
3. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the concentration of reducing agent in the aqueous solution is between about 0.05% to about 5% by weight.
4. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the concentration of reducing agent in the aqueous solution is between about 0.1% to about 2.5%.
5. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the oxidizing germicide is selected from the group consisting of chlorine, chlorine dioxide, peracetic acid, ozone, acidified sodium chlorite and acidified sodium nitrite.
6. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16 wherein the aqueous solution is applied to the disinfected ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections between about five seconds to one hour after application of the oxidizing germicide to the ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections.
7. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, where a water rinse is applied to the disinfected ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections before application of the aqueous solution.
8. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the aqueous solution is sprayed on the ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections.
9. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the disinfected ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections ~~is~~ are immersed in the aqueous solution.
10. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the aqueous solution further comprises a wetting agent.
11. (Currently amended) A The method of claim 16, wherein the aqueous solution further comprises a thickener.
12. (Currently amended) A method comprising reducing discoloration during processing of ~~meat~~ a carcass or carcass sections treated with an oxidizing germicide by contacting the ~~meat-carcass~~ or carcass sections, at a time period of between about five seconds to about one hour after germicide application, with an aqueous solution comprising a reducing agent.

13. (Currently amended) A method claim 12, wherein the ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections treated with an oxidizing germicide is subjected to a water rinse before contacting the meat with the aqueous solution comprising a reducing agent.
14. (Currently amended) A ~~The~~ method of claim 16, wherein the ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections treated with an oxidizing germicide is sequentially sprayed with, or dipped into, the aqueous solution comprising a reducing agent.
15. (Currently amended) A method of claim 12, wherein the ~~meat~~ carcass or carcass sections treated with an oxidizing germicide is sequentially sprayed with, or dipped into, the aqueous solution comprising a reducing agent.
16. (New) A method of reducing discoloration of meat tissue during the processing of an animal carcass or carcass sections, said method comprising applying to an animal carcass or carcass sections being processed a composition comprising an oxidizing germicide to disinfect said carcass or carcass sections, and after disinfection of said carcass or carcass sections, applying an aqueous solution comprising a reducing agent to said carcass or carcass sections wherein application of the aqueous solution to the disinfected carcass or carcass sections thereof reduces discoloration caused by the oxidizing germicide.